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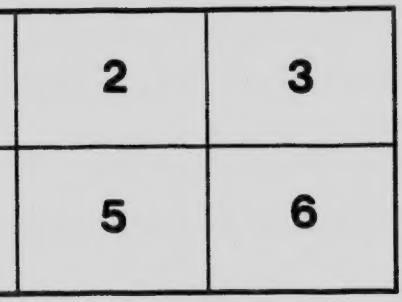

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CHURCH EXTENSION PAMPHLET NO. 5.

Letter to the Bishop of Algoma touching a sermon preached by him at St. Alban's on the 24th March, 1912 in the supposed interest of that Church

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Criticisms of the Cathedral Scheme are declared to be

"The Cry of Judas"

"The Utterances of Selfish Unbelief."

NO BISHOP—NO CATHEDRAL

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES

FOREWORD

In the "Globe" and "Mail," Bishop Thornloe, of Algoma, is stated to have preached on the 24th of March, 1912, "an eloquent sermon before a large congregation at St. Alban's, Toronto." In this discourse he set forth "the uses and necessities of a real Cathedral," and declared criticism of the scheme to be "The cry of Judas—the utterance of selfish unbelief."

Some of his statements are thus reported :- "Other bodies might erect impressive buildings and adorn them with magnificent appointments, but only the Catholic Church could produce a real Cathedral possessing the Divine atmosphere, the centre of real worship. The place of worship built by those to whom worship was largely identified with mere personal edification, who had no Bishops and who lacked appreciation of the historic continuity of God's dealings with mankind, must of necessity differ from the structure built for worship by the Catholic Church in which all these truths are enshrined."

"The uses of the Cathedral and the unifying influence of the Cathedral system in the Diocese were so evident that no amount of money or time expended upon it could be for a moment counted as wasted!"

The Bishop proceeded to "rebuke warmly the opposition of certain people who protested against this so-called waste of money in connection with the Cathedral."

He compared such criticism to "the cry of Judas—to what purpose this waste?" and proceeded to deal out the following consolation in connection therewith to his hearers:

"We need not be disturbed by such cries as they are only the utterences of selfish unbelief."

These remarks were at the time and are now much resented by the large number of members of our Church who do not believe in the Bishop's extreme High Church views in connection with this matter, causing discord among members of the Church of England and alienation from us by members of other religious bodies, who, in so many matters, are working harmoniously with us and desire, not only to continue, but to extend largely the spheres within which co-operation may be actively carried on in God's work.

I did not feel that I could allow these statements and the false position in which our Church, and many of its members have been thereby placed, to pass unnoticed, and I therefore wrote the Bishop on the subject, I think it well herewith to send you as a member of the Church of England of this Diocese a copy of such letter for your most earnest consideration.

8th April 1912

S.H.B.

Toronto, 25th March, 1912.

THE RIGHT REVEREND,
THE LORD BISHOP OF ALGOMA,
SAULT STE. MARIE, ONT.

My Dear Bishop,—

I thank you for your kind letter of acknowledgment and appreciative comment of "The State of the Church," by the Reverend Andrew Murray, which I sent you. If you think well of it I will gladly forward a copy of the book to all the clergymen in your diocese who you think will appr[illegible] and whose address you send me. Its diligent and prayerful [illegible] would be a powerful aid in raising us up to the high standard [illegible] at page 8:

> "[illegible]rship in the Church implies that the measure of Christ's surrender for our salvation is the only true measure of our surrender to Him and His Service."

What a blessed "Lent" this would be if it led all not merely for a short season, but in a perpetual covenant to seek by God's grace to live up to this standard! Is the Church doing its part in setting up boldly this standard in the midst of a world that worships at its own low shrine and is not sufficiently insistent in proclaiming the simple message of our Savior: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"; "Apart from Me ye can do nothing"; and thus in His own way obtain the needed guidance and power to be in the world and yet not of the world!

I fear our Church machinery, which becomes more complicated and cumbersome from year to year, teaches and leads our people to lean on man-made means and mechanical contrivances and bars the direct approach to the Audience Chamber of the Lord God Almighty, open to all through the Great High Priest who hath entered within the veil, the Advocate and Intercessor, needed by and free to all. He is as much needed by the Bishop as the layman, and is equally ready to listen to the petitions directly presented to Him by the one as the other, and to give the absolution and grace which all need and through Whom alone it can be given. We have one Mediator between God and men—the Man Christ Jesus. All can claim this, and no one man or woman, class or creed, more than another. The Spirit-filled book of Dr. Murray gives us a vision of light and judgment to which it would be well if the Church universal took diligent heed. How thankful a very large body of our people would be if our bishops broke their prolonged silence and gave us an epistle of light, guidance, and comfort in these days of wars and rumors of wars, of distress of nations, of men's hearts failing them for fear, a general falling away from the truth and of conformity to the world.

IS THIS IMPOSSIBLE?

While I was writing the above letter I took up this morning's edition of both the "Globe" and "Mail and Empire," and there read a report of a sermon which it is said you preached on the preceding Sunday, the 24th of March, in Toronto, in St. Alban's, in which you sought to aid the bishop by proceeding "to rebuke warmly the opposition of certain people who protested against this so-called waste of money in connection with the cathedral." You compared their utterances to "the cry of Judas," "to what purpose this waste?" And you supplemented the statement of this apostle by placing in the mouth of Christians who cannot support the new cathedral project the words—"This money might have been spent upon the poor or given for the evangelization of the benighted heathen still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," but you added with more cynicism than charity—"We need not be disturbed by such cries as these, they are only the utterances of selfish unbelief."

I know not by what authority you "rebuke warmly" in 1912 the many laymen of a Diocese other than your own who have been compelled from conscientious convictions to refuse to join in or subscribe to this project.

These views have been openly expressed for many years. They are well known. The arguments pro and con have been presented from time to time, and many have, after mature deliberation, considered that, whatever may be done in the future, the period has not yet arrived for bringing into existence a vast mass of machinery and a costly building not fitted to the present exigencies of this Diocese or to the Church generally in Canada.

No one has the right, no matter how great the need of the object advocated may be, to declare ex Cathedra these views to be a "criticism like the cry of Judas," and further to declare that "they are only the utterances of selfish unbelief."

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that these remarks are directed against those who, weighing in their minds as stewards responsible for the just expenditure of their money, conclude that the subscriptions asked for a cathedral and a cathedral system, as matters now stand in the Diocese, the Dominion, and the foreign field, "might," according to the statement of the bishop, "have been spent upon the poor or given for the evangelization of the benighted heathen still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death," rather than upon the luxury of a second cathedral in the city for this Diocese.

Now allow me to make the following protest in respect of the statement presented by you, in the hope that you would thereby favor your brother bishop's cathedral scheme in this Diocese.

Is there any exigency of any institution that could warrant you in comparing to Judas Iscariot those who conscientiously conclude that a second cathedral is not only not needed, but that the cathedral of the first

bishop, the Cathedral of St. James, should not be superseded, and that at the present, other much more pressing demands of God require our first and instant attention. Have you considered how inapt is the comparison you make? Does it not strike you as unfortunate that you, so firm a believer in apostolic succession, should make it? Why seek to degrade the laymen by bringing them down to the level of this apostle? Although he occupied a high position in the apostolate, being their General Treasurer, and carried the bag, yet he was the only apostle who turned his back on evening communion even with his Lord and Master, and when all the other apostles were partaking of it with Him, spent this sacred period with the priests in arranging for the betrayal and murder of his Lord, betrayed Him with a kiss, and went out and ended his miserable existence by committing suicide.

This is all the more abhorrent as on investigation you will find that those who have not thought fit to allow themselves to be stampeded into giving their money to the bishop's present cathedral scheme of the Diocese of Toronto have not needed a "Judas" or any other "cry" for not giving their money thereto, but that the records of the Diocese will show that without the donations of these men thus slandered, God's work in Toronto would be largely at a standstill, and that money sufficient to pay for several cathedrals has been paid by them into God's treasury for His work.

You have no right to stigmatize these sound conclusions of loyal Churchmen as "only the utterances of selfish unbelief." It will not benefit your appeal, whatever resentment it may create in the minds of those whom you are thus attacking. I cannot forbear here giving you a very striking instance of the view taken of this cathedral scheme, which possibly embraced the mode of advertising it, bringing it within the purview of a Cobalt undertaking with the oft-repeated statement that there was so much "ore in sight." A gentleman, an earnest member of the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto, contributed the large sum of $600,000 for church purposes in this Diocese during the period that these efforts were being made to complete the funds needed for the erection of the cathedral. But while his benevolence prompted him to expend $600,000 for church purposes, not one cent was by him dedicated to the cathedral building or to the cathedral system. Surely this should be an object-lesson as to the want of real interest that is taken in the cathedral project, and should answer completely the accusation that this arises from meanness, unbelief, or some other hypocritical pretence.

(2) Before making your attack so absolutely uncalled for, you must have been well aware of the position taken, by many in this Diocese, as shown in protests repeatedly made, from which the following extracts are taken:

> "The primary charge of the first Bishop of Toronto, Bishop Strachan, was by him 'delivered in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on the 19th of September, 1841.' Some now desire a second Cathedral and a great Cathedral establishment in the western part of the city. Let those who desire the erection

of such a building and the foundation of such an establishment build and found them. No one can prevent Churchmen who approve of this style of churchmanship and feel inclined thus to expend their money from so doing. This, however, will not appeal to those who greatly fear the exaggerated interest that is taken in 'structural beaut, 'Churchly appointments,' 'spectacular functions,' and ritualistic devices. Wh... as been called 'a Cathedral system' has been mooted for over sixty years and has never been taken up by the laymen responsible for the finances of the Diocese. Many have been absolutely unable to see how such great swelling words as 'the grand,' 'the great,' 'the residentiary,' or any other kind of 'Chapter' would aid or assist the carrying on of God's work or add to the power of the simple service and pure Gospel which the laymen and laywomen in our country long for. The crying demand of our Church at the present hour is for men—men who have the 'know how' and who can 'make good' our Church is dying for want of them. Without such men there may be piles of stone and mortar to ornament our City, beautiful effects to please the architectural eye, vestments to rival those of Aaron, lights, crucifixes, processionals, missions by the Monks of the Mirfield Community or even by the Missioner of St. Albans, services given up to Priests and Choir, but no building up of the true Church of God. If we are to tolerate these attacks on our solemn spiritual Church of England Service we must regretfully do so, but do not let us make ourselves responsible for them by aiding in bringing them into existence."

The late Archbishop thus presented the most important aspect of this scheme and the only one in which many can take any interest:

"Supposing that I had, resident in Toronto, say four Canons, men of thorough parochial experience, true missionary spirit, of a high order of pulpit power, of intense sympathy, and above all, full of earnest spiritual life, for they would need to be all this, the value of such a body of men would be incalculable, as counsellors and advisors."

"This is a conclusion in which all thoughtful men will coincide. It is not, however, unfair to say that if such a body of four men could be found in the Diocese it would not need a $300,000 cathedral to set them in motion. Without the proposed cathedral adjuncts you could not hold them back, liberty being given them, from entering upon such a work as would revolutionize the Diocese."

"But let every Evangelical in our Rural Deanery remember that very earnest and strenuous exertions will be needed on the part of every Protestant member of our Church for the next three years to complete and pay for the buildings in process of erection, for the additional ones which are proposed, and for the enlargements needed for Church, Sunday School and Missionary work. Evangelicals are pledged to complete the Endowment of Wycliffe College, which God is pleased to use so largely as the power house for supplying men for His work, and to answer the cry of our Deaconess Home, so urgent, for increased accommodation and additions to the staff. We are wanting in our duty if we fail to supply every parish asking for a deaconess with one thoroughly trained for this work. The demands from the spheres of action for which we are responsible in the Foreign Field cannot be overlooked. How pressing and instant are the wants of China, Japan, India, Africa and South America! These are all live objects for which Evangelicals are primarily responsible. We must put first things first and complete the Church and Sunday School buildings which we have undertaken and free them from debt. The amount needed to accomplish this is large. We must raise the sum needed to place Wycliffe and the Deaconess Home in the position that they should occupy as it ... tions which we inaugurated, and as they are faithfully doing their work ... are bound to sustain."

What right has any man to abuse those members of the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto, who, putting in the balance on the

one side the cathedral scheme, and on the other this splendid spiritual work, prefer to donate their money to this latter object and leave it to others who prefer the cathedral project to carry it out.

Let us humbly but unfalteringly insist that "the Shechinah" is needed rather than a gorgeous building and an elaborate formal service, and the trumpet blast of Jesus, proclaiming from one end of the Dominion to the other, this great fundamental truth, in answer to the hollow Jewish spectacular or any other such displays—"God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Let us bend all our energies to the building up of this great spiritual temple, to the true and lasting glory of God

(3) You urge "the unifying influence of the cathedral." But what is the meaning of these high-sounding generalities? What is to be taken as the standard of "unification" which it is sought to reach? Many look with extreme alarm at the efforts after the spectacular, the mechanical—what are called "churchly appointments," all of which are efforts continuously and openly made to unify our worship with that set by the Church of Rome. Much of what is found in the public service of the Church of England in the City of Toronto to-day is in absolute disregard of the solemn vows made by the clergy at their ordination. Vide the altar service, prostrations, lights, wafer worship, the confessional, and numberless assimilations to the non-Anglican service of Rome. How soon the clergy forget the solemn covenant made by them. They then entered, in the presence of God, into an agreement which as honest men they are bound to keep. It is bad in itself that this contract should not be kept, but disastrous, when the laity, viewing these dishonesties of the clergy and their disregard of their oaths, either lower their own standards of honest dealing, or refuse their leadership and cease to attend the churches where they are taught by word and practice in the most distinct manner that a "priest" considers that a bargain he makes is not a bargain to be kept.

Then consider what an impossible and absurd ideal is set by a cathedral service, for, if not all, nine-tenths at least of the churches throughout the Diocese! The more the spectacular and mechanical are exalted, the less the spiritual will be found, and the less will it be fitted for the common service of our Church. The more that there is of the man-made forms of worship the less will there be of the spiritual, and the more largely will the "house of prayer" be turned from the class of service urged by our Lord and Master. Do you not perceive that the laity generally are complaining that the loved service of our Church is brought back too much as in pre-reformation times, into a duet between the clergyman and the choir, and that as to almost the whole of it, the congregation might as well be absent from the building so far as actual participation in it is concerned.

(4) Very many members of the church saw with great sorrow how overburdened our late Archbishop was by the cathedral scheme and the

impossibiltiy of raising the money for the erection of the building. His efforts for twenty-five years had failed completely in accomplishing his earnest wish. A large debt had accumulated on the small building erected in 1886, to which no additions have since been made. In 1908 there was a strong committee formed, which had many meetings, and which then determined that an effort should be made to try and prevent a threatened lawsuit in respect of the amount due on the cathedral. After a good many meetings and much time expended in testing the feeling of the Church in the matter, the committee found they could not interest persons financially in the erection of the cathedral, and finally, on the 3rd of March, 1908, an earnest appeal was made for the raising of such balance as would, at least for the time, arrange the then existing debt. This sum is not yet completely discharged.

The following quotation from a letter dated the 3rd of March, 1908, from among many sent out to wealthy members of our Church in the Diocese, will show that the only basis on which the money could be raised was as a matter of relief of the Archbishop:

> "Can we not get in our City 150 persons who through affection for the Archbishop will give $100.00 each to the removal of the burden of this debt which he feels so keenly? I will be one of the 150, and I think that, dividing up the Churches, it would not be difficult to make up the balance."

This would have discharged the then pressing burden. Almost all of those, however, who subscribed to this fund simply contributed their money to relieve the Archbishop from a load of debt which he felt overwhelmingly. The movement arose from a just affection for our Diocesan, but the contributors did not desire thereby to signify their acceptance of the cathedral scheme.

A reference to the large correspondence that then took place and to the small response made to the very urgent appeals then presented personally and by letter is conclusive on this point.

It appears to me that your utterances referred to in this letter, so far from tending to the unification, building up, or edification of our Church, will but serve as a wholesome warning to Evangelicals of the unfair and bitter resentment held towards them by ritualists and sacerdotalists. Such ebullitions should certainly arouse our deep pity for those men and lead us to pray that God would enlighten their darkness and lead them into His truth so that the longed for harmony might be found in our Church. All Evangelicals should also firmly determine that their money shall be so safely guarded that no part of it may be diverted to those undertakings and spent upon those men on whose work, after careful consideration, the blessing of God cannot be by them asked.

It will be an interesting study to watch for any indications that will show that the blessing of God is being given to an edifice erected to the glory of the twentieth century method of advertising, as applied to ecclesiastical edifices.

"The end is not yet."

Faithfully yours,

S. H. BLAKE.